AUTUMNAL.

BY ERNEST DOWSON.

Pale amber sunlight falls across
The reddening October trees,
That hardly sway before a breeze
As soft as summer. Summer's loss
Seems little, dear, on days like these!

Let misty autumn be our part!
The twilight of the year is sweet:
Where shadow and the darkness meet
Our love, a twilight of the heart
Eludes a little time's deceit.

The New-York Tribune

SUNDAY, JULY 2, 1905.

It is curious to observe the persistence with which writers of a certain calibre are disposed to engage in the hopeless effort to pull themselves up by their boot straps, to gain effects not by dint of thinking hard and writing well, but through the introduction into their work of what they are pleased to call "strength." Some years ago it was in the name of art that they endeavored to make our flesh creep. They took to reading Maupassant, Flaubert, and the Goncourt brothers, and forthwith tried to persuade the world that it was legitimate to be squalid, so long as you were clever. That "movement" had its little day, and then, for a while, it was argued that epigram covered a multitude of sins. To the novel crackling with machine-made wit, there succeeded the owlish sociological story, the kind of book in which vulgarity is given free play under the pretence that the author is writing "seriously" about marriage and divorce. Morbid novels on the relations of the sexes are still printed, but their vogue has been challenged by the novels of brute force, books in which young authors talk mightily about getting down to the bedrock of human nature. It is in these books more particularly that your smart stripling is forever bringing in the name of the Deity, with an air, as who should say: "For a person of my brains and brawn, it were affectation to use the ceremony and taste of ordinary people; ceremony implying cowardice, and taste being only another name for namby-pamby, prudish refinement." All the time it seems to us that most of these ostentatiously "sincere" individuals are merely trying to play the old game of Gautier and his comrades, to shock the bourgeois—without any of the inspiration or excuse that the French romantics could claim.

It has occurred to the Editor of "The Academy" that it is about time for readers of fiction—and most of the people in the world are readers of fiction—to be granted a change of fare. "The question that young writers of genius ought to consider at the present moment," he says, "is whether or no it is possible to invent a new form of novel." No doubt there is abundant reason for wishing that something might be done to give current fiction a new twist, so to say. "The flatness characteristic of this class of composition to-day is undeniable," says our commentator, and we most decidedly agree with him. But before our "young writers of genius" begin to worry about the development of a new form of novel, they would better show that they can do something creditable within the limits of the form, or forms, already established. In other words, "The Academy" has got hold of the wrong end of the stick. It is not a new form that is needed, it is a new genius. It is absurd to say, for example, that "mere swordplay can now be put aside, probably forever." Mere swordplay will be used to good purpose in fiction for centuries to come, if only the right man arises to make use of it. Forms in literature have their ups and downs, and these are often glibly explained as due to "fashion," but, as a matter of fact, they rise or they fall according as they are employed by genius or by mediocrity.

Lieutenant Colonel Andrew Haggard has recently published a book containing a chapter on the Man in the Iron Mask, and it appears that he has adopted Voltaire's version of the subject, a version long since exploded. Considering the extent to which the matter has been discussed, and especially the thoroughness with which Mr. Funck-Brentano overhauled it, some five or six years ago, it is certainly hard to understand how any author could go wrong where the famous prisoner of Pignerol and the Bastille is concerned. That he was nobody more important than Count Ercole Mattioli, who got into trouble through playing fast and loose with Louis XIV and his master, the Duke of Mantua, and that his "iron" mask was really a light affair, made of velvet, everybody knows who has taken the trouble to glance at the problem. The incident of Lieutenant Colonel Haggard's failure to get abreast of modern scholarship is amusing as showing how long it takes a picturesque legend to die. Also, in exciting our wonder, it incidentally leads us to reflect on the slight excuse which any one has nowadays for slipping up on questions of this sort. Time was when there were not many historians in the world, but now there are hordes of them, in and out of the universities, and they are always busy in clearing up disputed points. The good men of the past are constantly having their laurels clipped, and the evil doers are as often treated to coats of the most deftly applied whitewash. These books may not be read as novels are read, but so much is said about them in the literary columns of the newspapers that the truth, or at least the latest guess at the truth, ought to be, and generally is, common property.

IVORIES.

The History of an Ancient and Beautiful Art.

IVORIES. By Alfred Maskell, F. S. A. (The Connoisseur's Library.) Illustrated. Royal 8vo, pp. xiii, 443. G. P. Putnam's Sons.

Works of art executed in ivory are accessible to the student in New-York almost every time a collection of Orientalia is sold at auction—and that is often enough—yet the broad field explored by Mr. Maskell is, on the whole, unfamiliar. The zealous collector alone is at all conversant with the extensive literature of the subject, and we are very glad, therefore, to welcome this latest addition to "The Connoisseur's Library." It is written with knowledge, and, like its predecessors in a singularly useful series, it is well illustrated and printed. Mr. Maskell has a subject of peculiar antiquity. Indeed, he can go as far back as prehistoric times, for we have sketches drawn on bone and ivory by savages amusing themselves before the dawn of civilization, and some of these disclose a facility in draughtsmanship suggesting art where art, in our modern sense, did not exist. It is interesting to note, moreover, that the ivory worker has exercised his function in all ages. He was active, as we have seen, when men lived in caves; he is active to-day, and throughout the intervening centuries he has rarely been idle. This is not surprising, in view of the potentialities of the substance in which he works.

Ivory is comparatively easy to carve; it has exquisite texture and color and it is extraordinarily durable. Though really large objects cannot be made out of it in a single piece, tusks have often been available which, by their generous dimensions, have permitted the craftsman to develop his design on a fair scale. Some of them are from eight to ten feet long and big enough in diameter for positively imposing slabs to be cut from them. Mr. Maskell has some striking notes on the sources of supply. In Siberia, for example, there are vast deposits of mammoth tusks and other remains of extinct animals. For the last two hundred years ivory has been dug up from these deposits, and still, according to Mr. Maskell, "the store appears to be as inexhaustible as a coal field." He thinks it possible that Siberia may be the great source of the material when the African elephant has been killed off. Some idea of the energy with which that valuable animal is being exterminated may be gathered from the following passage:

> When we consider the enormous drain on the supply of ivory in Africa alone, which has been going on for centuries, it is, indeed, surprising that the source has not long since been exhausted. The whole question is one which cannot fail to excite astonishment. To begin with, the mere number of elephants which roam over these territories is almost beyond calculation, and the supply of food which they must require is enormous. Literally, almost, they represent a forest of ivory tusks, and it is not a forest which can be periodically cut down and allowed to renew itself by growth from the same roots. Every pair of tusks represents a slain elephant. At the periodical sales of ivory in London parcels of a hundred tons and more are put up at auction. In the year 1900 the importation amounted to 11,757 hundredweight, which represented 60,000 tusks, and a value in its rough state of over half a million sterling. For billiard balls alone the sales of one of the great London firms are near 10,000 tusks a year. In 1888 the importation into Antwerp from the Congo amounted only to 36,400 kilos, say 1,000 hundredweight. In 1902 the Congo furnished to the same port 380,000 kilos. The prices at this market ranged for sound tusks from 28 to 38.25 francs. The greater part came from the Congo, but Senegal, Angola, Gaboon, Abyssinia, the Cameroons, Zanzibar and other places contributed about 40,000 kilos.

The ancient ivory hunter may not have rivalled the modern in the number of tusks which fell to his weapon, but he must have been pretty successful, if we may judge from the facts that there are allusions in Scripture pointing to lavish use of the material, that the Egyptians doted on ivory, and that the Romans made use of it with the same enthusiasm. In the fourth century the Latin poet Claudian speaks of the gathering of ivory and tells how "the great wonder of the Indies, the elephant, wanders about in tuskless shame." Mr. Maskell recalls that the Senate sent Porsenna an ivory throne, and if the substance was used for such magnificent purposes it was also used for the manufacture of many things forming part of the everyday life of the classic period.

One of the best chapters in this book is that which deals with the consular diptychs. It was customary among the Romans to write letters on tablets of ivory, which had been so hollowed out as to leave a raised margin to hold the thin layer of black or green wax on which words could be scratched with a metallic stylus. Just as in our own day a notebook may be simple or luxurious, according to the purse and taste of the owner, so the ancient Roman diptych varied in style according to whether the owner was an ordinary citizen, a wealthy Senator, or, above all, a Consul. Says Mr. Maskell:

> Ordinary writing tablets were usually of a handy shape. A common term for them was pugillares, because they could be conveniently held in the hand, and, as may be readily imagined, they were very frequently used for elegant presents, in much the same way as similar things are at the present day. Consular diptychs, however, and other diptychs made to commemorate special events were much larger, measuring generally about twelve inches in height by five or six in width, and correspondingly thick and massive. The fashion appears to have been prevalent of sending these magnificent ivory tablets as presents on the occasion of great family events or celebrations, such as a marriage, a coming of age, or the like, and doubtless it was of importance that the ivory should be of the finest description and of the largest size that it was possible to procure. In a similar manner new consuls, on their appointment, caused a number of such diptychs to be made for presentation to the Emperors and to their equals and subordinates on the day of their entering upon their office. The size, excellence of workmanship, and value of material, of course, would vary according to the rank of the recipient. If intended for officials, or others of the very highest position, they would be of fine ivory, carved by the best artists of the time, and perhaps mounted in gold; for others bone, rudely carved and roughly finished, would suffice, and these, possibly, were turned out by the dozen, or hundred, like modern photographs. Some of these tablets or diptych leaves are of extraordinary dimensions, again arousing our wonder as to the manner in which such very large pieces of ivory could have been procured.

From the few of the diptychs which have survived, it is plain that the Roman ivory worker was skilful and had artistic feeling into the bargain. The figures in low relief are sometimes charmingly modelled, they are adapted to their narrow frames with some sense of composition and the formal ornamentation is frequently of a most graceful character. With the opening of the Christian era both Western and Byzantine ivories increased in interest. Some of the early ivories, some of the shrines, triptychs, statuettes, pyxes and pastoral staves, are wonderful in workmanship. A surface which is, after all, to be measured only in inches, is covered with tiny figures, portrayed with thoroughgoing realism; these figures are set beneath cunningly designed arches, and the whole work is produced with a great deal of the delicacy of a goldsmith, and with much more freedom than he can ordinarily claim. Mr. Maskell makes a comprehensive survey of religious ivories, and with the aid of his illustrations the reader obtains a delightfully vivid idea of the subject. Turning to the secular side of the art, which began seriously to develop in the thirteenth century, he shows us many fascinating examples. Superb caskets belong to this period, and with them are to be grouped mirror cases, combs and drinking horns, all utilitarian objects, but executed in many cases with notable sensitiveness to beauty of form. It is in this more modern epoch that the author finds some impressive crucifixes, but we pass quickly from these to illustrations of post-Renaissance sculpture in ivory, to poetically designed plaques of nymphs and amoretti by Il Fiammingo, to tankards decorated by Lucas Fay d'herbe under the inspiration of Rubens, to dainty bacchanalian reliefs by Gerhard van Opstal and to masterpieces of execution, if not of taste, like the coin cabinet made by Christoph Angermair for the wife of Maximilian I of Bavaria.

This last mentioned treasure brings up a point which seems to have escaped Mr. Maskell's notice. It is an almost miraculous bit of manipulation, but it fails—and in this it is characteristic of an immense amount of sculpture in ivory—to suggest an artistic personality in the nuances of modelling. We do not mean to say that the ivories of all periods look alike in the subtleties of style. It is simply that something in the nature of the material seems to keep those subtleties from possessing quite the significance which belongs to masterpieces in marble or in metal. The sculptor in ivory may show marvellous dexterity and finish; he may, in fact, be robust or poetical, simple or elegant; but practically never does he leave upon his work the imprint which you find in the sculpture of a master employing another substance.

THE PSALTER OF THE PRINCESS MELISENDA.
(An ivory bookcover of the twelfth century.)

IRELAND, SAD AND KIND.

An Irishman's Clever Book About His Lovable Country.

IRELAND. Painted by Francis S. Walker, R. H. A. Described by Frank Mathew. Crown 8vo, pp. 212. The Macmillan Company.

WALES. Painted by Robert Fowler, R. I. Described by Edward Thomas. With a Note on Mr. Fowler's Landscapes by Alexander J. Finberg. Crown 8vo, pp. 213. The Macmillan Company.

Mr. Mathew's description of his country is in its discursive, unpretentious way a truly engaging one. The historical glimpses he offers are invariably picturesque; his sketches of modern Irish life and Irish character are frank and sympathetic; and he does not dwell unduly on scenery. Ireland, he tells us, is the saddest and kindest country on earth, a thing which he insists you should always remember in studying Irishmen. In the Ireland of the time of "Castle Rackrent" the sadness was not so often seen on the surface, though all the same, he holds, it inspired the feasting, the fighting and heroic improvidence, especially of the ruling class. "Just as half the misfortunes of the peasants," he says, "were caused by their land hunger, their desire to obtain or retain some portion, no matter how small, of their native fields, no matter on what terms, so the landlords were crippled by clinging to their inherited estates." The landlords, a remnant now, are giving up the struggle, and the children of the peasants "are now born with the instinct to fly from the land."

The especial characteristic of the Irish peasants, Mr. Mathew thinks, is an old fashioned courtesy. They are all sure, he asserts, that they are descended from chiefs, and their manners are ruled accordingly.

> Take shelter in any hut on the mountains and you will be greeted as if its inmates had been longing to see you. This will not be due to the fact that you seem prosperous; indeed, you would be even more graciously welcomed if you were in rags. Nor is their courtesy only exhibited when they are hosts. Once, when I was exploring the Burren of Clare, a ragged old woman seated by the wayside accosted my equally ragged driver. "Excuse me, sir," she said, "but did you happen to meet a loaf on the road?" "Deed then, ma'am," said he, bowing, respectfully, "and I'm sorry I did not." "Who was she?" I asked him when we had driven out of her hearing. "Deed then, and I don't know," said he; "'tis some poor soul that has lost her loaf and will be goin' to bed hungry to-night." On another occasion an aged man, clad in knee breeches and a swallow tail coat, addressed me, as I was climbing a path in Connemara, "I am thinkin', sir," said he, "that you are Mr John Blake." "Well, sir," said I "you are thinking wrong." "Well, sir," he answered solemnly, "says I to myself as I saw you come up the side, that is Mr. John Blake; and if 'tis not, says I to myself, 'tis a fine upsthandin' young man he is, whoever he is." Now I am convinced that he kn I was a stranger, but was not that a charming way to suggest that I should sit beside him on the low ferny wall and discuss the ways of the world?

In Leinster and Munster, which are included in that part of Ireland longest held by the English and called "the English Pale," there are often recounted legends of Cromwell which are not at all unpleasant. There is, for example, the story of Lord Plunkett, who wounded the English commander in the face and then made his escape. There came a day when he was captured and brought before Cromwell, who offered him